

AN
ESSAY
ON THE
CHARACTER

OF THE LATE
Mr. *WILLIAM BRUCE*.

IN
A Letter to a FRIEND.

*Stat sua cuique dies ; breve, & irreparabile tempus
Omnibus est vitæ : sed famam extendere factis,
Hoc virtutis opus.*

D U B L I N :

Printed for JOHN SMITH at the *Philosophers Heads*
on the *Blind-Quay*.

M.DCC.LV.

AN
ESSAYS
ON THE
CHARACTER
OF THE LATE
MR. WILLIAM BRUCE.



A Letter
TO A FRIEND.

Printed for J. Smith at the Edinburgh Press,
on the Blind-Press.
M.DCCCLV.

DUBLIN:
Printed for J. Smith at the Edinburgh Press,
on the Blind-Press.
M.DCCCLV.



(vi)
T O

ALEXANDER STEWART, of *Newtown*, Esq;

S I R,

TH E following Letter, which is an
Essay upon the Character of the late
Mr. *William Bruce*, I received from
a Gentleman, who was for many Years one of
his intimate Friends : And it is thought proper
upon many accounts to publish it. It is not
improbable that some, who knew not that ex-
cellent man, may look upon the extraordinary,
indeed, amazing, Character here given him,
as very much the creature of warmed imagi-
nation ; and think the author hath been la-
bouring, whether with exact justice or not, to
croud into it all the virtues, and graces, with
which human nature can be enriched. But

A 2

the

the matter is far otherwise; there is through the whole a strict regard to truth, and to represent real Life. This, you Sir, and all who had the happiness of knowing Mr. *Bruce*, will, upon the perusal of the letter, immediately discern: And you will not wonder, you cannot be displeased, that it is dedicated to you, who have lived so many Years with Mr. *Bruce* in the strongest bonds of Friendship, and in all the intimacies and highest delicacies of it, without interruption; especially, as this Essay will preserve the memory of that mutually honourable friendship, so long, as the Essay it self shall last. The fullness of my heart suggesteth a great deal more upon this occasion, but I should do wrong to the reader if I detained him longer from taking a view of human life, in its noblest finishings, and which, are rarely, very rarely, to be met with.

S I R,

Your most obedient Servant,

August 25,
1755.

James Duchal.



A N

ESSAY, &c.

S I R,

IT will, I believe, readily be owned by every capable judge, and who had access intimately to know the person whose character you desire to have traced out, that a finer subject could not well have been assigned; a subject, richer in all the various orders of moral excellence; in those beauties of the highest eminence, which compose a finished piece. But, to display these in their proper colours, and with that spirit of truth and correctness in the expression, which justice demands, would indeed require the hand of a master. Here only you seem to have erred. However, be this submitted to your own choice; and to that honest warmth of friendship (may I

not say of admiration) which prompteth us, in common, to pay this tribute to the memory of an excellent man; to attempt placing in a more public point of view, though but weakly, virtues so conspicuous as to do honour to human nature; and such as exhibit the fairest pattern for imitation: For it is real life and manners, and the assemblage of whatever adds grace and dignity to these, which giveth virtue its most striking effect on the beholders. Happy that man who, in the unremitting tenor of a good life, exemplifies what all, in some measure, may arrive at! The living Virtues exceed not the compass of humanity; they will excite the generous to emulation; while precepts of visionary men, and characters the creation of fancy, only teach despair to cut the nerves of industry. True worth may be cast so deep into the shades of obscurity, as to escape not only the public, but every undiscerning eye: Yet, even here, true Worth is its self—*“ nec vixit male qui natus moriensque fefellit ”*—self-satisfied, and hence anticipating the approving sentence of that all-seeing power, who penetrates the inmost thoughts; it may, perhaps, desire no other theatre. However, when the light of virtue breaketh through the shade, illustrating the fairest Exemplar of every thing praise-worthy, and alluring others to the love and practice of it; then only has it its most diffusive influence: indeed, all

all force of exemple apart, and the public merely considered, the poet saith right — “ *paulum se-
pultæ distat inertia celata virtus.*”

You, Sir, I know, measure men, and characters, by the true standard: Nor will any who do so need the glare of external advantages, to bribe their love, and veneration, for a character of such distinguished worth and dignity, as that of our late friend Mr. *William Bruce*; a man whose memory will long live in the hearts of the virtuous and wise; as his death must be deeply regretted, by all who truly knew him, and were lovers of mankind, of their country, of every amiable excellence that can adorn and ennoble human nature.

Custom, it is true, and the fond partiality of friends, are apt to be too profuse in oblations of this sort to the memory of departed worth; and, on many occasions, may have justly rendered them suspected. On the present occasion, however, be you Sir, a judge; or rather let truth it self bear witness, at least to the intended resemblance betwixt the portrait and the original. Neither flattery nor vanity can well find their account here: They have their proper retainers; and their work is, for mercenary ends, to throw deformity into the shade of deceit, to lay the brightest co-

hours of virtue on the face of vice. In truth, the character of our friend was, in many interesting points of view, so peculiar, so strongly marked, that a particular description of it, to every candid and intelligent person, must be a very pleasing, a very useful entertainment. To prejudice, to malignity, be it only said, they are not invited to this entertainment; and to each apart—" *Fragili quærens illidere dentem, offendet solido.*" To proceed to some of the most striking lines in the character before us.

The first favourable impressions generally enter at the eye; and from the exterior deportment in the common intercourses of life: And, doubtless, on the slightest acquaintance with Mr. Bruce, one saw in him a most exact regard to all the decencies, and proprieties of life; such an evident desire to oblige, and to make all about him easy, as became a good mind, and a liberal education. His general behaviour bore the genuine stamp of true politeness, the result of an overflowing humanity and benevolence of heart. In him were happily blended, true dignity with softness of manners: This, simple and sincere, the offspring of goodwill: His Dignity, commanding reverence, the result of unaffected Wisdom: Without any thing ungracious, or forbidding, it only checked the fallies of petulance and folly; while his gentle
and

and winning address produced into light, and encouraged modest merit. Such qualities very justly and forceably recommend; lying obvious to almost every observer. But, to the more discerning, a nearer view of him quickly discovered endowments, far above the common standard. He had, in truth, endowments of mind to have honoured any station.

In matters of speculation (whether abstruse in their own nature, or rendered intricate by false learning, and the arts of fraud) he exerted such a vigor, and clearness of perception, as seemed instantly to arrange objects before his mind, in the happiest order, in the truest light, without obscurity, without confusion. A very singular felicity of genius this! to possess an understanding clear, penetrating, comprehensive; and at the same time, highly improved by an almost constant and intense habit of thinking: And no wonder; for, to a mind endowed with such strong powers, so well directed; subjects great, extensive, and interesting, are its natural exercise; they are congenial to each other. Thus he was enabled to develop the most complicated questions; to seize the true point in debate; and with a precision that disincumbered it of all foreign matter. He really possessed such powers of reasoning, such a ray of discernment in illustrating truth, in detecting

detecting sophistry, as were very surprizing. How often have we known him, when warmed with the important truth, disclose such various topics of argument, such a vein of deep thinking, as lay quite beyond the reach of common abilities; and were the product of his own invention, and sagacity. Hence naturally arose a faculty of discerning the boundaries of internal light and darkness; the extent and limits of human understanding; how far it can go; and where, for want of clear and determinate ideas, it must stop. A faculty of very great utility; by confining our researches within their proper sphere, and preventing the mind from embracing empty shadows of knowledge, for the substance.

It was owing to this force of understanding, properly pointed, and undissipated by trivial or fruitless inquiries, that scarcely was there any branch of useful science with which he did not appear to be well acquainted: Far better, indeed, than many who bestow much time and attention on books; where the undiscerning are too often led astray, amidst an endless multiplicity of particulars, without the power of tracing things up to first principles: These, his sagacity quickly saw, and laid hold of; and with the clearest light of evidence, could carry them through the remotest deductions. Early in life, however, and during

during the course of a liberal education, he had cultivated an acquaintance with the best writers, ancient and modern, on the most interesting subjects : And it is still well remembered what an excellent turn of spirit, what taste for real learning, and what strength of genius he discovered, when but a youth at the university.

In the most useful science of morals he excelled ; deeply instructed in those foundations on which it most securely rests ; and on which its various parts, and orders, rise with united strength and harmony : In these he shewed profound skill ; and it was, at all times, quite easy to him, to exhibit them in the most convincing point of light. Indeed, no man better understood human nature ; the heart of man particularly, with its exquisite arrangement of instincts and affections. Besides, a perfect master he undoubtedly was, of all that part of *Ethics*, that important part, which relates to the natural rights of mankind ; to the foundations of civil government ; to the just measures of authority and submission ; to civil and religious liberty, and to the unalienable rights of conscience. All these points, points of such infinite concernment to the happiness of man, lay so clearly and distinctly in his mind, that no one seemed more fit, to put to silence the cavils of ignorant or interested gainsayers—they lay so
near

near his heart, that neither the terrors, nor allurements of this world, could have abated his zeal in the defence of them.

The same thing may be truly affirmed of his inviolable attachment to the great principles of religion, natural and revealed; an attachment generous, because the result of impartial inquiry, into the perfections of God; his moral government of the world; the grounds which lead to the belief of a future state of existence; the evidences of the truth and divine authority of the christian religion, and the singular usefulness of it, in advancing the great interests of mankind. In particular, he considered Christianity, not as a matter of curious disquisition; but as a discipline of the heart, a republication of the great original law of nature, concerning moral good and evil, and the supreme happiness, and ultimate destination of man—strongly reinforcing, and by more explicit sanctions, the natural anticipations, and sentiments of the human heart, relating to God's righteous government, and to the rewards and punishments of a future state: And all this promulgated in a manner most worthy of the benign parent of mankind, and best adapted to their wants and infirmities; namely, by a divine messenger, sent in the name of God, and by his immediate authority, sufficiently attested, and made known

known to the world. This view of revelation our friend was persuaded brought it most effectually home to mens bosoms, and to practice; which must be its great end. In this light he invariably beheld it; in this, he thought its evidence clear, and satisfactory. To say all on this head; he had a spirit manly, stedfast, intrepid, in asserting the cause of God, of virtue, of liberty; indeed, in pursuing every good work.

Perfectly corresponding to this was his conduct in life: No man lived on whom the inward power of principle was more clearly seen: The sense of right and wrong, planted in the human heart, and the same in all men, this he esteemed as the indispensable law of his maker; destined to be a governing and controlling power, through the whole of life. This principle he pursued uniformly, with a simplicity of spirit, and a firmness most distinguished; ever unbiaſſed by any inconvenient consequences that might accrue, either to himself, or to others, in doing so: Very minutely entering into this source of most immediate and intimate obligation; at the same time, accurately separating those things which the vain imaginations of men have pronounced virtuous and good, from what is so in reality: Solely attending to nature, to conscience, to the laws of God; but, with regard to what these taught,

taught, demonstrating an adherence unshaken, a sensibility most delicate.

In the more private relations of life, he maintained a character the most amiable: indeed, with regard to family-connections, and the nearer ties of consanguinity, he felt the tenderest affections. * Generous above his circumstances, almost beyond example. With true piety at home providing for, and in all respects acting as the common parent of many young persons, in a great measure committed to his care, and depending on him. These not only retain a grateful remembrance of his early and excellent instructions, of his watchful concern for their interests, equal to what the strongest parental instinct, guided by wisdom, could have exerted—They acknowledge

* If any shall be curious to know somewhat of the family of Mr. Bruce, thus much may be said. He was the youngest son of the Reverend Mr. James Bruce, dissenting minister at Killeleagh, in the county of Down; a man of a very reputable character, and well descended. He left a numerous family of children, sons and daughters, of whom William was the survivor; all of them having passed through life, with most unblemished reputations; and, some of them, beside our late friend, with characters highly distinguished for worth, and usefulness.

also,

also, that their support, their education, and establishment in the world, were principally owing to him. And in assisting to place them out in life, he was, above all things, solicitous to point them to that road, which he thought least encompass'd with snares ; and most likely to lead to true happiness, and usefulness : Nor would any way of life, however opening to view the fairest prospects of this world, have tempted his choice, while he believed it unfriendly to virtue : And it was his joy to find most of those whom nature had endeared to him, very chearfully to go along with him in such sentiments. Or, if in any instance, his reasonable expectation, his fond wishes for others, were disappointed ; (as folly and inattention will sometimes defeat the wisest counsels) still he persevered, while any good remained to be done, any evil to be prevented, in kind offices, even to the froward and unthankful ; nor did his kind offices yield to real injuries : keen, no doubt, he sometimes was in his expostulations ; but it was with most friendly purpose ; from a perfect abhorrence of every thing dishonourable ; and never so as to indulge ill-will against the person of the offender. Most justly may it be observed of him—" He carried resentment as the flint bears fire, which much enforced, shews a hasty spark, and straight is cold again."

But

But his strong benevolence of soul, overflowing the narrower limits of family-alliance, spread wide as his power and opportunity of doing good: when these invited, he was indefatigably industrious in the service of all his friends; and most fruitful in suggesting the ways and means best adapted to serve their real interests. Indeed, for discharging all the finest offices of true friendship, he had a soul excellently formed—a soul great, pure, affectionate. Of quick discernment who were worthy a place in that most endearing relation, he was, on his part, constant and unchangeable. Common attachments, the shadows of friendship, the issue of chance or fantastic likings, rashly cemented, are often as hastily dissolved: his had the purest virtue for its basis. True to himself, to his friend, in the most delicate, but most important services; with great address animadverting upon what was wrong, and admonishing with most faithful freedom,

One thing was very remarkable in all friendly intercourse with Mr. *Bruce*; of singular advantage to all his familiar acquaintances; and on which they justly set an high value; it was that unaffected free communication of his superior knowledge, of those generous sentiments, which flowed pure from the rich treasure of his mind, from the fulness of a liberal heart: And, certainly,

tainly, knowing to a very high degree must that man have been, who from converse with him did not receive real Instruction. Much as it is, at present, the strain of fashionable conversation, to wander through the Frivolous and the Insipid; yet he possessed the happy art of introducing to what is called good company, such subjects as were useful and important; and of doing this with perfect propriety of time and place.

But not his intimate friends alone, not only his familiar acquaintances, but in truth all men, even the lowest, within the reach of his influence, became the objects of his attention and regard. That question of an unfeeling heart, "And who "is my neighbour," he never put: Satisfied that to a good man, nothing is foreign which concerns humanity. He was the servant of all; and to that best of characters, "*In commune bonus*," no person had a more undoubted claim. But so it must have been; and multitudes are ready to attest the truth of what is asserted; for, his great and uncommon endowments of mind were animated to an unwearied activity, by an heart the seat of every benevolent affection—an heart, warm in every friendly office; fervent to prevent, to alleviate distress, to diffuse happiness; to nothing cool, but to his own ease, his convenience, his interest. After the most perfect exemplar, He went about doing

B

good.

good. His life a continued course of vigorous action, exerted to serve the noblest purposes; some, and those but short, intervals excepted, when acute pain, and languor of body confined him: These, arising from something inexplicable in his constitution, he had been subjected to from his youth up; and the disorder probably aggravated by the energy of his mind, and a tone of affection too high not to impair the springs of animal life.

Certain it is, his breast glowed with that exalted fervent Charity, which embraces the wide-extended interests of men, of communities, of the species itself. His social affections, ever awake, even those whose objects lye beyond the nearer ties of nature, on many occasions gave him most painful sympathetic feelings; so deeply was he interested in the fortunes of all with whom he had any connection; and the number of such was indeed most surprising; partly owing to an inextinguishable ardor, and diffusion of spirit, in doing good; beside the multiplicity of business, often of perplexing business, derived upon him, by the high estimation he deservedly stood in for sense and probity. He had often those important trusts committed to him, which speak the highest regards of the person who reposes them. Distress, perplexity in affairs, unmerited

unmerited want of any kind, resorted to him as to a common refuge; and their application never failed, but with his power to assist. In truth, his head, his heart, his hand, his tongue, his pen, he was all, and always, ready to be layed out for the advantage of others. To the truth of this, how great a cloud of witnesses!

It is observed of men not early trained in the road of business, and of a turn to contemplation, that they are often less fit to judge in, and to conduct affairs. The case was far otherwise with Mr. *Bruce*; whose sagacity eminently appeared in his extensive knowledge of men, and of the world. He was capable of penetrating into characters, and views; beyond most men; and the advice of no man, in the conduct of life, was more sought, or more justly depended upon; for he had an amazing quickness in starting expedients; in suggesting the best resources on all difficult emergencies. The truth is, he had acquired a most uncommon degree of Authority, and which still grew, the more in proportion as his counsel and assistance were used. It may well seem surprising, for a person in his situation, how wide his influence had spread: But it was that influence, that best authority, founded on the opinion of superiour talents, and on that perfect confidence, which inflexible integrity never faileth to

create. Well would Ambition merit a place among the Virtues, did she erect her high-aim'd structures on such a solid ground!

Hence was our Friend powerful to persuade, to command the assent, to inspirit the languid, to repress the fondly sanguine; in a word, to unite, and combine, the jarring tempers and interests of men; to carry into execution plans formed by wisdom and public spirit, for promoting the most extensively useful ends. Of this there remain monuments greatly to his honour; and which will not easily be effaced. * Hence also did the distin-

* In proof of this may be mentioned his important services, and at a critical time, in support of the great national manufacture. This at least appears to be acknowledged, by all the most intelligent persons engaged in it. And the present security and flourishing state of it owes, perhaps not a little, to his early vigilance, and zeal to rescue it from imminent danger.

Another instance may be given, of less public concern, indeed; yet likely to produce much good, and worthy of his beneficent spirit; namely, his devising, and setting on foot a scheme, by which a fund might be raised in support of the Widows and Orphans of dissenting Ministers. This at least true with respect to the northern province.

guished

guished for abilities, power, fortune, and high rank, court his friendship: nor could the shades of a private station prevent his virtues, unaided by wealth, or power, or place, from rising into very public observation. Worth so eminent, though in the vale of life, cannot be hid. And as the great commanding principle of his soul was to do the greatest good, superiour to every low ambition, to every self-regard; he only sought the aid of power, the more effectually to accomplish his generous purpose. For himself he desired, he solicited, he obtained nothing.

Devoted to the public, an object suited to the greatness of his mind, and to which he was ever ready to sacrifice his ease, his time, his health, his life; expecting no reward here, beside what the conscious heart confers, and the god-like joy of doing good. For this, content to suffer all that reproach, which ignorance, falsehood, and calumny, never fail to pour on opposing merit. Indeed, of his most solicitous regards for the common-weal, of his ardent love to his country, his country hath memorials, great, and which will shine out, when the Genius of liberty shall have dispersed those mists which, of late, have so much bewildered us. A warmer, a more faithful, a more disinterested votary, public liberty never had—a genuine patriot-spirit, which would have done honour to, and have

merited distinction, in the happiest periods of Greece and Rome. Far removed from the blind intemperate fumes of party-spirit, his Zeal was not more fervent than enlight'ned. No man better understood the great principles of sound policy. He had studied the springs, and balancing powers, of the british constitution; knew their internal operations, and whatever tended to invigorate the regular movement of the whole; or, on the other hand, to weaken, and throw it into disorder. This government of laws, and not of men, he revered, as the Basis on which public liberty securely rests—liberty, the birthright of man, and best pledge of every valuable blessing! Nor could any one boast a more firm attachment to, nor, on all occasions, express a stronger sense of the security resulting to our constitutional rights, from the present happy establishment. To the faithful Guardians of liberty he was ever ready to utter the glorious admonition of the patriot-sage;

“ Remember, O my friends, the laws, the
“ rights,

“ The generous plan of power deliver'd down,

“ From age to age, by your renown'd forefathers;

“ (So dearly bought, the price of so much blood)

“ O let it never perish in your hands!

“ But piously transmit it to your children.

Of a soul thus enriched with knowledge, thus filled with the love of goodness, one cannot help regretting, that nothing material remains in the way of writing. Many strains of conversation have we heard from him, on points of the last consequence, highly worthy to be recorded; and which, had they been committed to writing, could not fail to have been well received by all the lovers of truth. However, Sir, it is well known that he lived in the strictest bonds of friendship, with men who have given to the public works, very deservedly, of high reputation; men who held him in the highest esteem. In the retired social hours, consecrated, by genius and taste, to inquiries—“*non de villis domibusve alienis &c.*”—but of the most interesting nature; in the amicable collisions of such men, no wonder those lights were struck out, which opened to view some of the fairest, and most fruitful fields of knowledge: A party in most of these free and generous disquisitions, and consulted in all literary subjects, no small deference was paid to his opinion: and it has been owned with pleasure, that his sentiments contributed, not a little, to the perfection of very valuable writings, both on religious and philosophical subjects; of several of which he also had the revision.

However, after quitting the common road of business, instead of giving up his leisure hours to writing, he rightly obeyed the strong impulses of his nature, calling him out to virtuous action. Any thing he ever wrote, though always intended to serve ends worthy of a good man, and a good citizen (for so unquestionably it was, however obloquy may reclaim) yet, the occasions of his writing were incidental. Whenever the voice of his country sounded in his ears; when he thought the Genius of mischief, and its mortal instruments, were at work to violate her sacred rights; to steal upon the secure hour of unsuspecting Liberty—He was all aroused: the Public took full possession of him; and he poured out the unlaboured effusions of his heart, fearless of all danger, in a cause so glorious. Little solicitous about the manner, any farther than to lay before the public, in strong and intelligible characters, what, in his opinion, greatly concerned it to know; and full of the important subject; he was above attending to the forms of composition. To many, his style may appear involved, and the thoughts crowded: They are so; for they arose in profusion from a rich fund within; and he had not leisure to make that evolution of sentences, which saves a world of labour to

to a wandering languid reader. Thus much to small dealers in criticism.

But, in good earnest, it is amazing that he could have wrote at all, under so wretched a state of ill health—an effort, which spoke great strength of mind ; such an abstraction from pain, as very few are equal to ; and, above all, a thorow conviction of the critical moment of what he had to offer ; as well as of the great importance of that cause he was engaged in. In this whole matter he acted from a deep sense of duty ; with such religious regard to veracity, as nothing could have warped : and was, indeed, most nicely scrupulous to ascertain the truth of those facts from which he reasoned. Such strong conviction of important truth, and perhaps nerves irritable from disease, sometimes produced an acrimony in his expression ; this also grew from an honest zeal, for what he held far dearer than any private personal regards ; and from an indignation at what he thought disingenuous industry, to mislead the public eye from the true points in debate. * Be this as it may, and lye the

* Here, Sir, candour, and a strict regard to truth, may require some farther notice to be taken of an Infir- mity, which this excellent man, though sensible of, and labouring

the merits of the question on which ever side (a subject not now to be discussed) yet, when the ferment of party shall have subsided, one may venture to say it will appear, to every calm dispassionate mind, that our friend, with most upright steadfast intention, laboured to serve his country. In the same light, and exulting in the part he had acted, did he behold this great object, to the last. It appeared to be the latest of mortal cares that forsook his parting spirit! *—Happy that man who

labouring against it, could not always overcome: This was, a propensity to grow too warm in disputation: which, however sometimes offensive to others at the present, and to himself painful on reflection; yet, instantly vanished with the occasion; not leaving behind it the least trace of ill-will, or rancour. Besides, the constitutional heat from whence this sprung, in numberless important instances, had most happy effects; and, upon the whole, contributed to render his character more highly finished. After all, *Foibles* partly growing from ill habit of body, and complexion, how difficult to be quite rooted up! and how amiable that character, in which this appears to be the only one worth notice, which the severest scrutiny could have discovered!

* He died on the eleventh of *July*, 1755, in the fifty fourth year of his age; and notwithstanding the rapidity of the fever, in peace; enjoying that *euthanasia*, so much the wish of the wise.

shall

shall go and do likewise! Who shall persevere in this race of glory, till he arrive at the goal! Victory shall reward him with a never-fading crown; and peaceful, and honourable, shall his close of life be!

In the last place, if we view him in that light which diffuseth the brightest glory around any human character; if we consider him, as a member of the great family of God; as a loyal subject of his moral Kingdom; in this highest relation, did his heart constantly triumph. He entertained the most honourable sentiments of his Maker; of the greatness and goodness of the divine counsels: God's moral government, and the final happiness of the righteous under it, his most favorite topics. The loss of a becoming sense of this from the minds of men, and of that faithful allegiance so indispensibly due to the universal parent; he justly thought to be the great source of coldness to the offices of piety; of that profligacy of manners, and indulgence to animal passions, which tend to supplant all the endearing charities of life, and to loosen the firmest bonds of society. His opinion too it was, that many modern productions in Philosophy, falsely so called, strongly tended to tear up those great principles, which lye at the foundation of religion, and virtue: or, at least,

to

to throw them still more out of sight, by substituting at the head of things, in place of an universal sovereign Lawgiver and Judge, only an unconcerned vague principle of intelligence ; a mere physical, instead of a moral dominion.

His religion thus flowing from the justest sentiments of Deity, became a liberal, a manly service ; the consummation of the human powers : On the one hand, equally removed from the timid servile genius of Superstition ; as, on the other, from the wild excesses of Enthusiasm. At present, it is but too visible, that all public offices of Devotion are wearing fast into disuse, with multitudes who still assume the christian name. Self-sufficiency, levity of spirit, dissipation amidst the cares and pleasures of life, appear to have usurped, as a fashionable distinction, a privilege, which neither true wisdom, nor the regards due both to God and man, can pretend to justify—the privilege, of seeming at least to hold in contempt all the exterior, and auxiliary parts of Religion. Be this as it will, Mr. *Bruce* set a far different example. He thought that religion grew from the best principles of our nature ; that it trains them up to their highest perfection ; best securing the peace and happiness of Individuals, and of communities. In consequence of this, he took great pleasure in
the

the natural and proper expressions of that veneration which is due to the Supreme Being; and in the most public and solemn testimonies of it. At the same time, and on all occasions, he shewed an utter abhorrence of all domination over conscience: And therefore associated with that denomination of christians, which he thought was most tenacious of its rights, against every usurpation of man: to which he was indeed a very singular ornament; and to which he would have unalterably adhered, in the most iniquitous times, and at all events. * In

* Of the importance of the protestant Dissenting Interest, even in a political view, he always expressed the fullest persuasion. As a lover of freedom, and of legal government, he was, you know, warmly concerned for its support. He thought the true ground of such dissent (arising from a steadfast uniform assertion of that liberty, wherewith God and nature have made us free) to be the most impregnable barrier, against every encroachment, of whatever tyranny. These matters he considered, with the compass of an able master in politics; of one who takes in all the natural operations, and remote tendencies of things. His soul, indeed, was too great, to lay much stress on many of the *minutiae* of altercation; idle niceties, in comparison, which angry Zealots, on all sides, have been so apt to draw out through endless mazes of controversy.

his

his life, and manners, appeared a degree of purity most exemplary ; at the greatest distance from every stain of criminal indulgence : thus, doing honour to the dignity of his nature ; above all, to the majesty of that presence, which is universal ; under an immediate deep sense of which he ever acted.

And now, may he not justly be ranked as one of those extraordinary lights, sometimes set up by Providence, to shed a benign influence on all within their sphere ; and to illumine many who might otherwise wander in the dark paths of error ? Happy they, who having had nearer access to this light, shall be found to have caught a ray of the heavenly fire ! As, on the contrary, how just will be their reproach, not to have profited in proportion to their several capacities ? much more, to have turned away their eyes from copying so bright an example ? For, how delightful must it be, to look up to a character of such exalted worth ! To see, even in a downward age, a voluntary homage payed to it ! To behold it shining out with un-
 sullied lustre—a lustre all its own, and nothing indebted to that spurious glare reflected from external pomp, and the so much envied goods of fortune ! Nor need the most humble virtues doubt a sure reward ; conducted, like his, by true wisdom, and
 flowing

flowing from the clear spring of undefiled goodness within—they need not despair of attaining to eminent degrees of every thing good, and honourable; provided they are animated with an equally pure and fervent love of God, of mankind, of all moral excellence, though with much unequal powers of mind; and are careful to maintain the same uniform exact self discipline with our friend. To conclude,

“ He was a man, take him for all in all,

“ We shall not quickly see his like again.”

Thus, Sir, in obedience to your desire, and from the most cordial regard to the memory of an excellent man, I have attempted to illustrate his character: To exhibit a picture of that fairest order of beauty, the beauty of the mind. You should have had it sooner, had not want of leisure, and of practice in this way, prevented. It is not improbable that strangers to the original, or an eye unaccustomed to contemplate paintings of the moral kind, may imagine this to be wrought up beyond the life. Affection, indeed, may have laid on the colours warmer than ordinary; but the principal lines, it is hoped, will be found not incorrect; at least, not one stroke has designedly offended against truth. To you, Sir, the appeal is made,

made, than whom no man knew, or could know
 Mr. *Bruce* more thoroughly. Indeed, to many,
 to very many, it may be made with confidence.
 Do you recognize the likeness, if a good one: If
 otherwise, do as you shall think proper; the thing
 is intirely submitted to your disposal.

I am, SIR, &c.

August 11th.
 1755.

4 AP 54

